

CANADIAN AND EUROPEAN VARIETIES FOR THE FRESH MARKET

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Potato breeders are always busy -which is a good thing- trying to develop fresh market varieties with traits that enhance farm sustainability: low fertility requirements, resistance to diseases, and attractive, tasty tubers preferred by consumers. Every year, potato-breeding programs evaluate advanced clones at several locations to determine how well the new clones perform under different weather patterns and soil conditions. Very few clones are ever released as varieties. Releasing a variety is no guarantee that growers will grow it, but there are key traits that a new variety should have. New varieties intended for the fresh market should have:

- **Attractive Appearance:** Smooth, bright skin are traits requested by buyers. Good examples are the yellow fleshed variety Colomba (European) and the white fleshed Envol (Quebec). These 2 varieties are used for cartons and are paid a premium by buyers.
- **Early maturity:** This is a plus for fresh market growers. Envol is the earliest white flesh variety grown in Ontario, but it has to be grown in soils not infested with common scab.
- **Yield:** A profitable marketable yield is essential for farm sustainability.
- **Consistency & Predictability:** Once you are familiar with the variety, you should be able to determine how much nitrogen fertilizer and other nutrients are required to obtain certain yield with the tuber size profile you need for your market. Another example of consistency and predictability is performance under tough conditions such as wet or hot summers.
- **Disease resistance:** Resistance to common scab is an important trait in areas where this soil-borne bacterial disease is a problem. Fresh-market producers with scab problems in their fields, need to trade off some of the above mentioned traits for common scab resistance.
- **Nutrient requirements:** This is a desirable trait because it lowers production costs. Several of the newer varieties from Europe grow well with low nitrogen levels.

In this presentation the following varieties will be discussed:

White Flesh: Envol, August Beauty, Kalmia, AAC Hamer, Sifra,

Cream colored flesh: Volare

Yellow flesh: Ambra, Colomba, Electra, Vivaldi, Nicola, Alegria, Talent